



## **ACMI Aged and community care service providers rural and remote eMentoring project**

### **Introduction**

My name is Sarah Stewart and I am the project officer who is responsible for implementing the ACQI eMentoring project. I have been a midwifery educator for some years but now I am specializing in eLearning, professional development and life-long learning using the Internet and social networking tools, focusing on health professionals and care workers.

### **General aims of the project**

Mentoring describes a relationship between mentor and mentee that encourages growth and development in a respectful and collegial environment. Mentoring is seen as a strategy that will strengthen the provision of aged and community care in Queensland by providing support for staff, which in turn will improve recruitment and retention in the workplace. Traditional support is usually carried out in a face-to-face context. However, many staff do not have access to this form of support because of time constraints, funding and geographical isolation.

This project is designed to connect aged care and community staff to mentoring support that would otherwise not be available in their services. Using technology, eMentoring will provide an alternative for professional support and practice development. eMentoring includes the use of the telephone, email, discussion lists, blogs, wikis, instant messaging and web conference.

### **What type of participants are being sought?**

I am seeking aged care workers, nursing and allied health professionals and community care workers who are willing to be mentors, or feel they would benefit from being mentored. People who are new graduates, just joined a health care organization, recently changed or about to change role, or have recently returned to work may especially benefit from being mentored. Participants may be working in any field: care provision, management, education or research.

Participants will be provided with:

- Free computer training
- Free mentoring training

- Appropriate equipment
- Ongoing support from the project officer
- Opportunities for ongoing mentoring education, professional development and networking with other mentors and mentees.
- Opportunity to provide feedback about the project.

### **What does participation involve?**

Should you agree to take part in this project you will be asked to commit to being in this project for up to six months.

### **If you wish to be a eMentor**

If you volunteer to be an eMentor, you will be asked to send me an application form containing details of your professional and personal skills and experience. You will also be asked to provide a short biography and photograph, which will be made available to mentees. Mentees will be invited to choose a mentor based on the information that mentors provide. You will also be asked to provide information about your computer skills so I can work out what technical support and training you will need.

Once your application to be a mentor has been accepted, you will be sent a mentoring handbook that will include information about your role as an eMentor, and how to get the best out of your mentoring relationship. You will also be provided with appropriate computer training and equipment. You will be invited to a mentoring workshop to meet your mentee and learn more about mentoring. At the workshop your mentee and you will be asked to develop a contract which will include aims, objectives and expectations for the mentoring relationship, including how you will communicate with each other. Both you and your mentee will have a copy of the contract. Once the contract has been agreed, you may start your mentoring relationship.

Support will be provided by the project officer. There will also be ongoing opportunities for education, professional development and networking with other mentors and mentees via web conference and web site. At several points during the project you will be asked for feedback about the progress of your mentoring relationship and the project itself. You may also be required to keep logs of the communications you have with your mentee.

### **If you wish to be mentored**

If you wish to be mentored you will be asked to send me an application which will include your details including your requirements of a mentor. You will also be asked to provide information about your computer skills so I can work out what technical support and training you'll need.

Once your application has been accepted, you will be sent information about the mentors. You will be asked to choose three mentors in order of preference. Hopefully, you will be able to have one of the mentors of your choice. If none of the mentors are available, I will make further suggestions to you. You will be sent a copy of the mentoring handbook

that will include information about your role as an eMentee, and how to get the best out of your mentoring relationship. You will also be provided with appropriate computer training and equipment.

You will be invited to a mentoring workshop to meet your mentor and learn more about mentoring. At the workshop your mentor and you will be asked to develop a contract which will include aims, objectives and expectations for the mentoring relationship, including how you will communicate with each other. Both you and your mentor will have a copy of the contract. Once the contract has been agreed, you may start your mentoring relationship.

Support will be provided by the project officer. There will also be ongoing opportunities for education, professional development and networking with other mentors and mentees via web conference and web site. At several points during the project you will be asked for feedback about the progress of your mentoring relationship and the project itself. You may also be required to keep logs of the communications you have with your mentee.

### **Modes of communication**

You will be encouraged to use whatever mode of electronic communication suits you, which may range from email to web conference using programs such as Skype and Elluminate. You may be asked to keep a log of your communication, detailing how, when and where you communicate and a brief summary of the issues you deal with.

Training and support will be provided so that you are familiar with all modes of electronic communication.

### **‘No-fault’ clause**

You will be encouraged to have a ‘no-fault’ clause in your mentoring contract. This means that if your mentoring relationship breaks down, no fault will be attributed to either participant. If the mentoring relationship does break down, you are very welcome to debrief with me, and you may be offered the opportunity to have another mentor/mentee.

Participating in this project is voluntary. You can decline to participate without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. You may withdraw from this project at any time until 15<sup>th</sup> June without any penalty. However, I will ask you to provide feedback if your mentoring relationship breaks down before the end of the project. If participants withdraw before the end of the project, any data I have gathered up to that point will be included in the final report.

### **How will confidentiality and/or anonymity be protected?**

All information you provide to the project officer will be kept confidential.

You will be required to keep any mentoring interactions confidential. At no time may you record personal details of patients/clients. There is no legal privilege between mentor and mentee, or between participants and project staff. This means that any thing you record

can be subpoenaed and used in legal proceedings. Therefore, it is very important that you think carefully about the information you share, especially if it is about patients and patient care.

### **Responsibility for advice**

Responsibility for decision-making lies with you. You are the one accountable for your practice, not your eMentor/Mentee. If you act on the advice of your eMentor/Mentee which leads to a negative outcome, the responsibility will lie with you. However, as yet this has not yet been tested in legal proceedings. You should always view advice from your eMentor/Mentee in relation to your professional and employment responsibilities, standards and policies.

### **Storage of data**

Data will be kept securely at Aged Care Queensland Headquarters for five years and then will be destroyed.

### **How will data collected be used?**

Results of this project may be published but any data included will be kept anonymous and in no way be linked to any specific participant without prior consent. The project will be published in a report that will be submitted to the Department of Health and Aging. It may also be submitted for publication in professional journals and be presented at academic conferences. If you would like a copy of the project report, please let me know.

### **Professional development**

At the end of the project you will be issued with a certificate of participation which you may put into your professional portfolio. There may also be a possibility of gaining a mentoring qualification if you are a mentor. Details of this qualification will be communicated to participants once they have been finalised.

### **What if you have any questions?**

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me:

Sarah Stewart  
Aged Care Queensland Inc  
6 Pavilions Close  
Jindalee Qld 4074

Post:  
PO Box 995  
Indooroopilly  
Qld 4068

Phone: 07 3725 5555  
Cell: 0488 731277  
Email: [sarahs@acqi.org.au](mailto:sarahs@acqi.org.au)

Website: <http://sarah-stewart.blogspot.com>

Thank you very much for considering taking part in this project. I appreciate that being a participant is a big commitment so I thank you very much in advance. I hope you enjoy the challenge of taking part in this eMentoring project. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sarah Stewart

# Consent Form for aged and community care staff taking part in ACQI eMentoring project 2009

## Project Title

.....

I have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

- my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
- I am free to withdraw at any time until 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009 which is the time the final report will be written;
- I am free to withdraw at any time however, any data collected up until that time will be included in the project analysis and I will be asked to provide final feedback and communication logs;
- I must keep all mentoring interactions confidential;
- I must not record the personal details of a patient or client;
- all raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years after which it will be destroyed. If it is to be kept longer than five years my permission will be sought;
- there is no legal privilege between myself, project staff or mentor/mentee, which means that any documentation may be subject to subpoena in the event of legal proceedings;
- I am responsible for my practice even if my actions are based on the advice given to me by my mentor/mentee. However, I understand that this has not yet been tested in legal proceedings;
- the results of the project will be published and used as presentations in academic conferences but my confidentiality will be preserved.

I agree to take part in this project under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

.....(name of participant)

.....(signature of participant)

.....(date)

.....(signature of project officer)

.....(date)

Please return the consent form in the stamped addressed envelope provided.